

**MINUTES OF
THE ADVISORY BOARD FOR INTERPRETERS BETWEEN HEARING INDIVIDUALS
AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE DEAF, DEAFBLIND, HARD OF HEARING, OR ORAL
DEAF**

MAY 6, 2016 QUARTERLY MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT

Raphael James, Chairperson
Jami Hollingsworth, Secretary
Debbie Pearce (by phone)
Holly Ketchum
Karin Binko
J.R. Courtright
Jerri Finch

ADH STAFF PRESENT

Elizabeth Harris, ADH Attorney
Bethany McLaughlin, ADH Legal

GUESTS PRESENT

William Gorum, Interpreter
Linda Stauffer, Interpreter
Jaimee Jensen, Transcriber

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson, Ray James, called the Quarterly Meeting of the Advisory Board for Interpreters between Hearing Individuals and Individuals who are Deaf, Deafblind, Hard of Hearing, or Oral Deaf (the "Advisory Board") to order at approximately 2:00 p.m., on Friday, May 6, 2016. Roll was called and a quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes from the February 5, 2016 Licensure Subcommittee and Quarterly Meetings of the Advisory Board were presented, along with Minutes from the March 4, 2016 Licensure Subcommittee meeting.

Ms. Hollingsworth made a motion to approve the February 5, 2016 Licensure Subcommittee Meeting and Quarterly Meeting minutes of the Advisory Board. Ms. Binko seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection.

Ms. Finch moved to approve the March 4, 2016 Licensure Subcommittee meeting minutes. Ms. Ketchum seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on Rules and Regulations Promulgation Process

Ms. Harris stated that the changes to the Rules and Regulations approved by the Advisory Board on February 5, 2016, were taken to the State Board of Health for approval on April 28, 2016. The Board unanimously approved the proposed amendments to begin the rulemaking process. On April 29, the Rules were sent to the Governor's office for approval. Once approval from the Governor is received, the Rules will be filed and opened for public comment.

NEW BUSINESS

Adding Background Check Requirements

Ms. Ketchum stated that recently a person wanted to become an interpreter who was a sex offender and had recently gotten out of jail. This caused her and her organization some concern. She went on to say that several other states are starting to add criminal background checks to their process, for example New Hampshire asks on its application if you have ever been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor. She asked for other Board Members' opinions on this issue.

Debbie Pearce stated that, as an educational interpreter in public schools, she is required to have a background check. These checks do not carry over from one school district to another or to an institution outside of the public school system. However, that is a full background check. Ms. Pearce asked if this is what Ms. Ketchum was asking for or just the question on the application form.

Ms. Harris clarified that a formal background check requires that each applicant provide their fingerprints and social security number. This information is put into a database with the State Police and the FBI (for out of state applicants). This costs money and requires training for anyone looking at the report generated on each applicant. You can also ask the applicants to self-disclose criminal background on the application. This does not allow for verification.

Ms. Binko asked what the purpose of the background checks is. Ms. Ketchum responded, if a person is a sex offender, would they be able to interpreter at the Deaf School around children? Would we be liable for allowing that person to have a license if they were a sex offender?

Mr. James stated that adding the question to the application would be no good; there are no teeth behind that. He added that entities that work with children should be requiring their own background checks for each person. He explained that when UALR places students in the school systems for internships, they must provide the school district with a background check for each student.

More discussion ensued regarding the current background check requirements to work with children.

Ms. Harris explained the process for statutory change to add criminal background checks. More discussion ensued on how background checks as part of licensure would work in practice.

Mr. James suggested an ad hoc committee be formed to research what other states are doing. Ms. Ketchum made a motion to set up an ad hoc committee to investigate whether to add a background check requirement and what other states are doing, with a report back to the Board by the November Quarterly meeting. Mr. Courtright seconded the motion. Discussion about who to invite to serve on the committee ensued. Mr. James suggested inviting Cheryl Sugg. Ms. Hollingsworth suggested Myra Taff-Watson be invited. Ray Boyland was also suggested.

Ms. Hollingsworth stated the directive of the committee should be to investigate what other states are doing and how other agencies are handling hiring interpreters. Mr. James said he would work with ADH legal to draft a directive and send a formal invite to the recommended committee members.

Debbie Pearce and Holly Ketchum were named as the Board Members to serve as co-chairs of the ad hoc committee.

After discussion, Mr. James called for a vote on the motion to establish the committee. The motion passed unanimously.

Louisiana State Sign Language Interpreter Certification

Ms. Harris stated that someone applied for licensure a week ago that had a Louisiana certification. The applicant had other credentials that had already been approved. However, Ms. Harris explained that she told the applicant the Louisiana credential would be reviewed by the Advisory Board for approval and that the applicant could attend and present any information she wished the Board to consider. The applicant was not present for the meeting.

Ms. Harris explained that based on her research, it appears Louisiana does something similar to Arkansas. Mr. James stated that is correct, however, they do not have a state certification test, like QAST. They are 100% dependent on other entities.

Discussion ensued on the Louisiana credentialing process. Ms. Hollingsworth pointed out that Louisiana credentials based on national credentials. Therefore, there was no reason to accept the state credential; rather we should request documentation of the underlying credential. Ms. Hollingsworth moved to request the underlying credential on any application coming in with only a Louisiana credential. Ms. Finch seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition.

OTHER BUSINESS

Licensure Subcommittee Update

Ms. Hollingsworth stated that the Subcommittee met on May 6, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. She went on to say it was reported that there are 145 licensees currently, and that twenty-six licensees have not renewed and are now inactive. She stated that there are four applications in process. Two appeals were discussed today at the Subcommittee meeting. One was placed on hold to allow for submission of further documentation. The other was denied for failure to supply additional documentation.

Ms. Hollingsworth presented a question about CEUs to the full Board. Ms. Hollingsworth asked about how college credit can be used as CEUs. Mr. James stated that it must be recognized by the individual's credentialing body. Therefore, EIPA holders would not get CEUs for college credit. A brief discussion ensued.

ADE Request for Licensee Information

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) contacted ADH about getting information on licensees to schools that need to hire credentialed interpreters. Ms. Hollingsworth stated that schools could look at RID's website for nationally credentialed interpreters. Also, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) works with hiring entities to share contact information on credentialed interpreters. That organization could coordinate with schools to send out the information. Ms. Finch suggested working with Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) to set up a tracking system for educational interpreters.

Ms. Finch made a motion to contact licensees and give them a limited time to respond regarding releasing their information to ADE. Mr. Courtright seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition.

Financial Update

Ms. Harris reported that the Advisory Board had made some money since the last meeting. They now have \$45,686.77 in the account. For the fiscal year, the Advisory Board has made \$14,385.00. They have expensed \$930.00. The largest bulk of expenses are for interpreters and transcribers at meetings. The other large expense for the Advisory Board is postage. Another \$5,000 has been committed to technology, like videos translating documents into American Sign Language that have been discussed at previous meetings.

The Advisory Board discussed using funds to increase education in the Deaf community regarding the licensure law.

Ms. Harris did add that the one compliant that has been received was closed without making any findings. Ms. Harris and Ms. Binko confirmed that there were not enough details to move forward on it.

Ms. Harris mentioned education on this issue would be important. Mr. Courtright agreed and mentioned using the videos in ASL to accomplish this. Ms. Harris stated that it is hard for her to coordinate that project without help; she does not know enough to really facilitate getting it accomplished.

Mr. James stated that he felt this would require a committee that includes people outside of the Board members. Ms. Ketchum moved to establish a technology subcommittee for the purpose of exploring putting ASL content on the website to educate the Deaf community. Ms. Hollingsworth seconded. Discussion about committee specifics ensued. Ms. Hollingsworth volunteered to be on the Committee. Mr. Courtright agreed to serve as well. They were named co-chairs. Mr. James recommended asking Brad Sims to serve. Mr. Courtright recommended Doug Murphy who works with UAMS.